



News release

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New report shows cardiovascular disease is causing hundreds of thousands of deaths each year amongst young people of productive age

A report to be released at Columbia University's Earth Institute, New York on Monday 26th April, will reveal a dramatic epidemic of cardiovascular disease (CVD) amongst young people of productive age in developing countries.

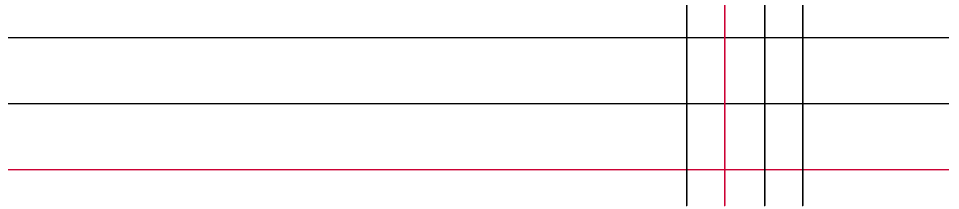
The report, *A Race against Time: the Challenge of Cardiovascular Disease in Developing Economies*, shows that dangerously insufficient attention is being given to CVD prevention and control in developing countries by governments, health authorities and international aid agencies. CVD is cutting into productive workforces in developing countries now, manifesting the same pattern of mortality as it did in the West in the 1960's before prevention and treating began.

The World Heart Federation, an NGO dedicated to the global prevention of heart disease and stroke, strongly endorses the report's conclusions. "CVD has always been seen as a disease of affluent and older people in developed nations, yet 80 per cent of all CVD deaths occur in low-and middle-income countries. CVD is the leading cause of mortality, with one in three of all deaths caused by the non-communicable disease. A major finding of this report is that in developing countries the onset of CVD occurs among younger people, increasingly affecting those of working and productive age," said Professor Philip Poole-Wilson, President, World Heart Federation. In South Africa for example, 41 per cent and in India 35 per cent of all CVD deaths occurred among those aged 35-64 during 2000-2003 and in China it is projected that by 2030 over half of all CVD deaths will be amongst those in the prime working ages of 35-64.

"Until now, governments, health authorities and the medical community have neglected CVD and the burden it imposes on developing economies. Virtually no international aid goes into CVD prevention and control. Unless intervention programmes are put into effect now we will witness a global health crisis in developing countries as skilled workers die or become disabled, women are widowed and older people require expensive medical support for disability related to CVD," said Janet Voûte, CEO, World Heart Federation. "We expect this report to be a significant wake up call."

The report *A Race Against Time* and further media materials are available at: www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu





Note to Editors

The Center for Global Health and Economic Development

The Center for Global Health and Economic Development is a joint project of The Earth Institute at Columbia (www.earth.columbia.edu) and Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health. It includes the Access Project for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which is funded by the Glaser Progress Foundation and the U.S. Agency for International Development. In addition to the Access Project, CGHED staff members have worked with health officials to establish a national Task Force on Macroeconomics and Health. The Task Force seeks to implement the recommendations of the World Health Organization's Commission on Macroeconomics and Health, which was chaired by Professor Sachs. The Commission's 2001 report, "Investing in Health for Economic Development," shows that, in addition to reducing suffering and improving well being, investing in health can be a concrete input to economic development, and indeed is essential for economic and social development in the world's poorest countries.

The World Heart Federation

The World Heart Federation is a Non-Governmental Organisation based in Geneva and dedicated to the prevention and control of cardiovascular diseases around the world. The Federation is committed to helping the global population achieve a longer and better life through prevention and control of heart disease and stroke, with a particular focus on low and middle-income countries. The World Heart Federation is comprised of 168 member societies of cardiology and heart foundations from 98 countries and continental members covering the regions of Asia-Pacific, Europe, East Mediterranean, the Americas and Africa. For further information visit www.worldheart.org or www.cwnewsroom.ch

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